

Final recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements  
for Suffolk Coastal

Report to the Secretary of State for the  
Environment, Transport and the Regions

*June 2001*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Suffolk Coastal.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)  
Professor Michael Clarke CBE (Deputy Chairman)  
Peter Brokenshire  
Kru Desai  
Pamela Gordon  
Robin Gray  
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

© Crown Copyright 2001

Applications for reproduction should be made to: Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit.

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by the Local Government Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright.

Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper.

Report no: 238

# CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>13</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>45</i>
APPENDICES	
A Final Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal: Detailed Mapping	<i>47</i>
B Draft Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal (January 2001)	<i>51</i>
C Code of Practice on Written Consultation	<i>53</i>

A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Kesgrave, Martlesham and Woodbridge is inserted inside the back cover of the report.





## Local Government Commission for England

26 June 2001

Dear Secretary of State

On 27 June 2000 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Suffolk Coastal under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in January 2001 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 177-178) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Suffolk Coastal.

We recommend that Suffolk Coastal District Council should be served by 55 councillors representing 34 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to be whole council elections every four years.

The Local Government Act 2000, contains provisions relating to changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as Orders are made implementing those arrangements we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the District Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Suffolk Coastal on 27 June 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 9 January 2001, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Suffolk Coastal:

- **in 34 of the 42 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and 24 wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 37 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 23 wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 177-178) are that:

- **Suffolk Coastal District Council should have 55 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 34 wards, instead of 42 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 40 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of eight wards and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **whole council elections should continue to take place every four years.**

These recommendations seek to ensure that the number of electors represented by each district councillor is as nearly as possible the same, having regard to local circumstances.

- **In 31 of the proposed 34 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward, Rendlesham, expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

Recommendations are also made for changes to parish council electoral arrangements which provide for:

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the towns of Felixstowe, Kesgrave and Woodbridge and the parish of Martlesham.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 6 August 2001:

**The Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions  
Local Government Sponsorship Division  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU**

Figure 1: The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Aldeburgh	2	Aldeburgh ward (Aldeburgh Town); Buxlow ward (part – Aldringham-cum-Thorpe parish)	Map 2
2	Earl Soham	1	Earl Soham ward (part – Brandeston, Earl Soham, Easton, Kettleburgh and Letheringham parishes); Hasketon ward (part – Charsfield parish); Otley ward (part – Cretingham, Hoo and Monewden parishes)	Map 2
3	Farlingaye (in Woodbridge)	1	Woodbridge Farlingaye ward (Farlingaye ward of Woodbridge Town); Woodbridge Central ward (part – Central ward of Woodbridge Town (part)); Woodbridge Seckford ward (part – Seckford ward of Woodbridge Town (part))	Large map and Map 2
4	Felixstowe East	2	Felixstowe East ward (part – East ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe North ward (part – North ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe South East ward (part – South East ward of Felixstowe Town (part))	Map 2 and Map A3
5	Felixstowe North	2	Felixstowe Central ward (part – Central ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe North ward (part – North ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe South East ward (part – South East ward of Felixstowe Town (part))	Map 2 and Map A3
6	Felixstowe South	2	Felixstowe Central ward (part – Central ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe South ward (part – South ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe West ward (part – West ward of Felixstowe Town (part))	Map 2 and Maps A2 and A3
7	Felixstowe South East	2	Felixstowe Central ward (part – Central ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe East ward (part – East ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe South ward (part – South ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe South East ward (part – South East ward of Felixstowe Town (part))	Map 2 and Map A3
8	Felixstowe West	3	Felixstowe Central ward (part – Central ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe West ward (part – West ward of Felixstowe Town (part))	Map 2 and Map A2
9	Framlingham	2	Framlingham ward (Framlingham Town); Dennington ward (part – Dennington and Badingham parishes); Earl Soham ward (part – Saxtead parish)	Map 2
10	Grundisburgh	1	Bealings ward (part – Great Bealings and Little Bealings parishes); Grundisburgh & Witnesham ward (part – Culpho and Grundisburgh parishes)	Map 2
11	Hacheston	1	Dennington ward (part – Bruisyard, Cransford, Rendham and Swefling parishes); Glemham ward (Great Glemham, Hacheston, Little Glemham, Marlesford and Parham parishes)	Map 2
12	Hollesley with Eyke	1	Hollesley ward (Boyton, Butley, Capel St Andrew, Hollesley and Wantisden parishes); Tunstall ward (part – Chillesford parish); Ufford ward (part – Eyke parish)	Map 2

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
13	Kesgrave East	3	Kesgrave ward (part – Kesgrave East ward of Kesgrave Town as proposed); Martlesham ward (part – Martlesham West ward of Martlesham parish as proposed)	Large map and Map 2
14	Kesgrave West	2	Kesgrave ward (part – West ward of Kesgrave Town as proposed)	Large map and Map 2
15	Kyson (in Woodbridge)	1	Woodbridge Kyson ward (Kyson ward of Woodbridge Town); Woodbridge Seckford ward (part – Seckford ward of Woodbridge Town (part))	Large map and Map 2
16	Leiston	3	Buxlow ward (part – Knodishall parish); Leiston ward (Leiston Town)	Map 2
17	Martlesham	2	Martlesham ward (part – Martlesham parish ward as proposed)	Large map and Map 2
18	Melton & Ufford	2	Melton ward (Melton parish); Ufford ward (part – Ufford and Pettistree parish)	Map 2
19	Nacton	2	Kirton ward (part – Hemley, Newbourne and Waldringfield parishes); Nacton ward (Brightwell, Bucklesham, Foxhall, Levington, Nacton, Purdis Farm and Stratton Hall parishes)	Map 2
20	Orford & Tunstall	1	Orford ward (Gedgrave, Iken, Orford and Sudbourne parishes); Tunstall ward (part – Blaxhall and Tunstall parishes)	Map 2
21	Otley	1	Hasketon ward (part – Boulge, Bredfield, Burgh, Dallinghoo, Debach and Hasketon parishes); Otley ward (part – Clopton and Otley parishes)	Map 2
22	Peasenhall	1	Bramfield & Cratfield ward (part – Chediston, Cookley, Cratfield, Heveningham, Huntingfield, Linstead Magna, Linstead Parva, Ubbeston and Walpole parishes); Yoxford ward (part – Peasenhall and Sibton parishes)	Map 2
23	Rendlesham	1	Tunstall ward (part – Campsey Ash and Rendlesham parishes)	Map 2
24	Riverside (in Woodbridge)	1	Martlesham ward (part – Martlesham North ward of Martlesham parish as proposed); Woodbridge Central ward (part – Central ward of Woodbridge Town (part)); Woodbridge Riverside ward (part – Riverside ward of Woodbridge Town (part)); Woodbridge Seckford ward (part – Seckford ward of Woodbridge Town (part))	Large map and Map 2
25	Rushmere St Andrew	3	Rushmere ward (Rushmere St Andrew parish)	Large map and Map 2
26	Saxmundham	2	Kelsale ward (Kelsale cum Carlton and Theberton parishes); Saxmundham ward (Saxmundham Town)	Map 2

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
27	Seckford (in Woodbridge)	1	Woodbridge Seckford ward (part – Seckford ward of Woodbridge Town (part); Woodbridge Central ward (part – Central ward of Woodbridge Town (part); Woodbridge Riverside ward (part – Riverside ward of Woodbridge Town (part)	Large map and Map 2
28	Snape	1	Buxlow ward (part – Friston parish); Snape ward (Benhall, Farnham, Snape, Sternfield and Stratford St Andrew parishes)	Map 2
29	Sutton	1	Alderton & Sutton ward (Alderton, Bawdsey, Ramsholt, Shottisham and Sutton parishes); Ufford ward (part – Bromeswell parish)	Map 2
30	Trimleys with Kirton	3	Kirton ward (part – Falkenham and Kirton parishes); Trimleys ward (Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary parishes)	Map 2
31	Walberswick & Wenhaston	1	Bramfield & Cratfield ward (part – Bramfield and Thorington parishes); Walberswick ward (Blythburgh, Walberswick and Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet parishes)	Map 2
32	Wickham Market	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Wickham Market parish)	Map 2
33	Witnesham	1	Bealings ward (part – Playford, Tuddenham St Martin and Westerfield parishes); Grundisburgh & Witnesham ward (part – Swilland and Witnesham parishes)	Map 2
34	Yoxford	1	Westleton ward (Darsham, Dunwich, Middleton and Westleton parishes); Yoxford ward (part – Yoxford parish)	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

2 Map 2, Appendix A and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Aldeburgh	2	3,235	1,618	-2	3,690	1,845	8
2 Earl Soham	1	1,685	1,685	2	1,725	1,725	1
3 Farlingaye (in Woodbridge)	1	1,582	1,582	-4	1,600	1,600	-6
4 Felixstowe East	2	3,459	1,730	4	3,527	1,764	3
5 Felixstowe North	2	3,347	1,674	1	3,363	1,682	-1
6 Felixstowe South	2	3,550	1,775	7	3,593	1,797	5
7 Felixstowe South East	2	3,625	1,813	9	3,598	1,799	6
8 Felixstowe West	3	5,008	1,669	1	5,094	1,698	0
9 Framlingham	2	3,440	1,720	4	3,535	1,768	4
10 Grundisburgh	1	1,812	1,812	9	1,825	1,825	7
11 Hacheston	1	1,689	1,689	2	1,680	1,680	-1
12 Hollesley with Eyke	1	1,641	1,641	-1	1,625	1,625	-5
13 Kesgrave East	3	3,837	1,279	-23	4,825	1,608	-6
14 Kesgrave West	2	3,060	1,530	-8	3,060	1,530	-10
15 Kyson (in Woodbridge)	1	1,600	1,600	-3	1,632	1,632	-4
16 Leiston	3	4,789	1,596	-4	4,870	1,623	-5
17 Martlesham	2	3,861	1,931	17	3,621	1,811	6
18 Melton & Ufford	2	3,635	1,818	10	3,725	1,863	9
19 Nacton	2	3,330	1,665	1	3,385	1,693	-1
20 Orford & Tunstall	1	1,624	1,624	-2	1,680	1,680	-1
21 Otley	1	1,785	1,785	8	1,835	1,835	8
22 Peasenhall	1	1,709	1,709	3	1,695	1,695	-1
23 Rendlesham	1	1,333	1,333	-19	1,490	1,490	-13
24 Riverside (in Woodbridge)	1	1,617	1,617	-2	1,594	1,594	-6

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
25	Rushmere St Andrew	3	4,591	1,530	-8	4,640	1,547	-9
26	Saxmundham	2	3,072	1,536	-7	3,390	1,695	-1
27	Seckford (in Woodbridge)	1	1,614	1,614	-2	1,608	1,608	-6
28	Snape	1	1,567	1,567	-5	1,600	1,600	-6
29	Sutton	1	1,615	1,615	-2	1,645	1,645	-3
30	Trimleys with Kirton	3	5,452	1,817	10	5,505	1,835	8
31	Walberswick & Wenhaston	1	1,701	1,701	3	1,820	1,820	7
32	Wickham Market	1	1,797	1,797	9	1,805	1,805	6
33	Witnesham	1	1,646	1,646	-1	1,635	1,635	-4
34	Yoxford	1	1,731	1,731	5	1,815	1,815	7
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>91,038</b>	–	–	<b>93,730</b>	–	–
	<b>Averages</b>	–	–	<b>1,655</b>	–	–	<b>1,704</b>	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on Suffolk Coastal District Council's submission.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Suffolk Coastal. We have now reviewed seven districts in Suffolk as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our second review of the electoral arrangements of Suffolk Coastal. The Commission began a periodic electoral review of the district in 1992. However, as a result of the Secretary of State adopting an accelerated timetable for the structural reviews, we were directed to discontinue the review of Suffolk Coastal. An earlier review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1979 (Report No. 365). The electoral arrangements of Suffolk County Council were last reviewed in June 1982 (Report No. 429). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

3 In undertaking these reviews, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie the need to:
  - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the District Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward.

Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in the two-tier district areas, and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 27 June 2000, when we wrote to Suffolk Coastal District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Constabulary, the local authority associations, Suffolk Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 2 October 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 9 January 2001, with the publication of our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal*, and ended on 5 March 2001. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and our further consultation, and now publish our final recommendations.

## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

12 The district of Suffolk Coastal is located in the south-eastern corner of Suffolk, and is bounded by Waveney to the north, Mid Suffolk to the west and Ipswich to the south-west. The district has a population of over 120,000 and is predominantly rural in nature, containing many villages and settlements. Felixstowe is the largest town in Suffolk Coastal and comprises 20 per cent of the district's total electorate, while Woodbridge is the district's administrative centre. The main geographical features of the district are the River Deben, River Alde and Butley River, which divide the south-eastern part of the district into a number of peninsulas. The A12 trunk road divides the district, linking it with Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth to the north and Colchester and London to the south. The district contains 117 parishes and is entirely parished.

13 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the district average in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

14 The electorate of the district is 91,038 (February 2000). The Council presently has 55 members who are elected from 42 wards. Two of the wards are each represented by three councillors, nine are each represented by two councillors and 31 are single-member wards.

15 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Suffolk Coastal District, with around 41 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,655 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,704 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 34 of the 42 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, 24 wards by more than 20 per cent and 13 wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Martlesham ward where the councillor represents 158 per cent more electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Suffolk Coastal*

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Aldeburgh	2	2,494	1,247	-25	2,820	1,410	-17
2 Alderton & Sutton	1	1,384	1,384	-16	1,405	1,405	-18
3 Bealings	1	1,442	1,442	-13	1,450	1,450	-15
4 Bramfield & Cratfield	1	1,499	1,499	-9	1,470	1,470	-14
5 Buxlow	1	1,719	1,719	4	1,845	1,845	8
6 Dennington	1	1,507	1,507	-9	1,535	1,535	-10
7 Earl Soham	1	1,360	1,360	-18	1,380	1,380	-19
8 Felixstowe Central	2	2,799	1,400	-15	2,840	1,420	-17
9 Felixstowe East	2	3,097	1,549	-6	3,160	1,580	-7
10 Felixstowe North	2	2,935	1,468	-11	2,955	1,478	-13
11 Felixstowe South	2	2,861	1,431	-14	2,880	1,440	-16
12 Felixstowe South East	2	3,042	1,521	-8	3,010	1,505	-12
13 Felixstowe West	2	4,255	2,128	29	4,330	2,165	27
14 Framlingham	1	2,334	2,334	41	2,430	2,430	43
15 Glemham	1	997	997	-40	970	970	-43
16 Grundisburgh & Wivensham	1	2,016	2,016	22	2,010	2,010	18
17 Hasketon	1	1,294	1,294	-22	1,290	1,290	-24
18 Hollesley	1	1,271	1,271	-23	1,260	1,260	-26
19 Kelsale	1	1,074	1,074	-35	1,110	1,110	-35
20 Kesgrave	3	6,711	2,237	35	7,700	2,567	51
21 Kirton	1	1,677	1,677	1	1,715	1,715	1
22 Leiston	3	4,080	1,360	-18	4,175	1,392	-18
23 Martlesham	1	4,270	4,270	158	4,030	4,030	136
24 Melton	1	2,819	2,819	70	2,910	2,910	71
25 Nacton	1	2,694	2,694	63	2,750	2,750	61
26 Orford	1	1,018	1,018	-38	1,095	1,095	-36

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
27 Otley	1	1,107	1,107	-33	1,170	1,170	-31
28 Rushmere	2	4,591	2,296	39	4,640	2,320	36
29 Saxmundham	1	1,998	1,998	21	2,280	2,280	34
30 Snape	1	1,298	1,298	-22	1,320	1,320	-23
31 Trimleys	2	4,411	2,206	33	4,425	2,213	30
32 Tunstall	1	2,040	2,040	23	2,175	2,175	28
33 Ufford	1	1,316	1,316	-20	1,320	1,320	-23
34 Walberswick	1	1,317	1,317	-20	1,445	1,445	-15
35 Westleton	1	1,151	1,151	-30	1,190	1,190	-30
36 Wickham Market	1	1,797	1,797	9	1,805	1,805	6
37 Woodbridge Centre	1	1,447	1,447	-13	1,435	1,435	-16
38 Woodbridge Farlingaye	1	1,482	1,482	-10	1,495	1,495	-12
39 Woodbridge Kyson	1	953	953	-42	950	950	-44
40 Woodbridge Riverside	1	1,194	1,194	-28	1,155	1,155	-32
41 Woodbridge Seckford	1	1,113	1,113	-33	1,175	1,175	-31
42 Yoxford	1	1,174	1,174	-29	1,225	1,225	-28
<b>Totals</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>91,038</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>93,730</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,655</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,704</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Suffolk Coastal District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Snape ward were relatively over-represented by 22 per cent, while electors in Felixstowe West ward were relatively under-represented by 29 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

17 During Stage One we received 21 representations, including district-wide schemes from the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Councillors Hall and Howard. We also received representations from 14 parish councils and a further five representations from local parties and local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal*.

18 Our draft recommendations were largely based on the Liberal Democrats' submission, which provided for significant improvements in electoral equality and provided a mixed pattern of wards throughout the district. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local and community identities and interests, we decided to move away from the Liberal Democrats' proposals in the south-western part of the district. We also put forward our own proposals for the Felixstowe area as the Liberal Democrats' submission did not provide detailed warding proposals for this area. We proposed that:

- Suffolk Coastal District Council should be served by 55 councillors, the same as at present, representing 34 wards, compared with the current 42;
- the boundaries of 40 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of eight wards;
- there should be new parish warding arrangements for Felixstowe, Martlesham, Kesgrave and Woodbridge.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Suffolk Coastal District Council should comprise 55 councillors, serving 34 wards.  
The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

19 Our proposals would result in a significant improvement in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 32 of the 34 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average by 2005.



## 4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

20 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 274 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Suffolk Coastal District Council and the Commission.

### **Suffolk Coastal District Council**

21 The District Council generally accepted the Commission's draft recommendations but supported Felixstowe Town Council's submission for warding arrangements in the Felixstowe area (discussed below). The District Council also proposed amendments to our proposed Martlesham, Riverside and Kesgrave East wards.

### **Suffolk County Council**

22 Suffolk County Council broadly supported the Commission's draft recommendations. However it commented that the increased use of RAF Woodbridge may be for short tours of duty, and such Armed Forces personnel are unlikely to register to vote.

### **Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrats**

23 Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council largely supported the Commission's draft recommendations but expressed specific support for Felixstowe Town Council's alternative option of 11 members for Felixstowe. The Liberal Democrats also proposed revised warding arrangements for Leiston and Melton & Ufford wards. The Group agreed with the District Council's proposals for Martlesham and Riverside wards and reiterated their Stage One proposal for the Trimley's with Kirton area.

### **Suffolk Coastal District Council Labour Group**

24 The Labour Group on the District Council opposed the Commission's draft recommendations for the Felixstowe area and expressed support for Felixstowe Town Council's 12-member scheme. The Group stated that should this not be acceptable to the Commission, then it would support Felixstowe Town Council's 11-member scheme for the Felixstowe area.

### **Suffolk Constabulary**

25 Suffolk Constabulary considered that while our draft recommendations for Suffolk Coastal will have an impact on policing arrangements in the district, there would be no ward "impossible to police as an entity".

## **Parish and Town Councils**

26 We received 25 submissions from parish and town councils. The parishes of Badingham, Bawdsey, Hollesley, Melton, Rushmere St Andrew, Wickham Market and the grouped parish council of Swilland & Winesham supported our draft recommendations in their areas.

27 Felixstowe Town Council opposed the Commission's draft recommendations for the town of Felixstowe and proposed an increase in the number of district councillors from 55 to 56 to enable Felixstowe to be represented by 12 members. The Town Council provided two sets of proposals for warding arrangements in Felixstowe. Option One proposed six two-member wards. Option Two proposed an 11-member scheme for Felixstowe.

28 Kesgrave Town Council largely supported our draft recommendations but opposed the proposed warding of Kesgrave on the grounds of community unity. Woodbridge Town Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but proposed a boundary amendment to our proposed Riverside and Martlesham wards, arguing that such an amendment would better reflect community identity. Martlesham Parish Council proposed amending the boundaries in the north and in the east of our proposed Martlesham ward to better reflect community identities in these areas.

29 Aldringham-cum-Thorpe, Friston and Knodishall parish councils opposed the Commission's proposals for revised Aldeburgh, Leiston and Snape wards. The parish councils favoured retaining the existing Buxlow ward on the grounds of community identity and Aldringham-cum-Thorpe Parish Council proposed warding the proposed Aldeburgh ward. Knodishall Parish Council also enclosed a 47 signature petition favouring the retention of Buxlow ward.

30 Great Glemham, Grundisburgh & Culpho, Little Bealings and Kirton & Falkenham parish councils generally opposed our draft recommendations in their respective areas.

31 Pettistree and Rendlesham parish councils opposed the proposed Rendlesham ward. Pettistree Parish Council stated that it had community ties with Wickham Market and Rendlesham Parish Council expressed a preference to be included in a ward with Campsey Ash, Eyke, Tunstall and Wantisden.

32 Sutton Parish Council opposed the proposed Sutton ward and argued that urban wards will "swallow up" rural wards. Ufford Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations and expressed support for the District Council's proposed amendment to create two single-member wards. Sudbourne and Yoxford parish councils opposed the Commission's proposed Yoxford and Orford & Tunstall wards respectively, and reiterated their Stage One proposals. Eyke Parish Council stated a preference for being combined with similar rural parishes and not Rendlesham.

## **Other Representations**

33 A further 244 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations. Councillor Bestow (Carlford division) broadly supported our draft recommendations but expressed a preference for combining Great Bealings, Little Bealings and Playford parishes. He

also supported, along with Councillors Dangerfield and Paddick (Felixstowe West), the Commission's draft recommendations for the Felixstowe area. Councillor Smith (Felixstowe Central) proposed an alternative scheme for the Felixstowe area, based on 11 members. Councillor Kelso (Martlesham) expressed concern over Felixstowe Town Council's proposals to increase the council size from 55 to 56. He also opposed our draft recommendations for the Martlesham area and expressed support for the District Council's proposals for the Martlesham and Woodbridge Riverside wards.

34 Suffolk Association of Local Councils generally opposed the Commission's draft recommendations, arguing that we would create wards which would be impossible to properly represent due to their geographical size. West End of Felixstowe (South) Residents' Association opposed our proposals to reduce the number of councillors in Felixstowe from 12 to 11.

35 Martlesham Consultants Ltd opposed the proposed Kesgrave East ward and argued that an area of land that they manage would be divided between two district wards. They proposed a minor boundary modification enabling the area concerned to lie wholly in Martlesham ward.

36 We received a further 236 submissions from local residents during Stage Three. 49 local residents in the Martlesham area opposed the Commission's draft recommendations in the west of the ward and argued that our proposals would not reflect community identity and interests. Four were also opposed to our proposals in the north of the ward, also on the grounds of community identity and interest. A further 184 residents from Buxlow ward opposed our draft recommendations for this area and argued that the existing Buxlow ward formed a "cohesive unit". Two residents opposed our draft recommendations for a new Trimleys with Kirton ward and argued that our proposals did not have regard to the statutory criteria. One local resident supported our draft recommendations for an 11-member scheme in the Felixstowe area.



## 5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

37 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

38 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

39 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

40 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five year period.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

41 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of almost 3 per cent from 91,038 to 93,730 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Kesgrave ward, due to new housing developments. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

42 We received three further submissions regarding electorate forecasts at Stage One. Leiston cum Sizewell Town Council argued that the District Council had underestimated the projected electorate for the existing Leiston ward by up to 200 electors. Felixstowe Town Council argued that a number of new planning permissions, including the former Felixstowe College site, had not been considered by the District Council and that the projected electorate figures for the area had therefore been underestimated. Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council considered that the projected electorate of the existing Rushmere ward for 2005 had been underestimated by 700 electors.

43 The District Council recognised that its electorate forecasts had been subject to comment by a number of parish and town councils. However, in its submission, it argued that its forecasts remained the best estimate available. We accepted that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and were content that, on the basis of the evidence received at Stage One, they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We welcomed further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three of the review. We received no comments on the Council's electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

## **Council Size**

44 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

45 Suffolk Coastal District Council is at present served by 55 members. At Stage One, the District Council proposed retaining the existing council size of 55, having considered a number of warding options based on council sizes ranging between 49 and 55. It submitted a district-wide scheme based on the existing council size of 55 which, it argued, would provide the most equitable warding arrangements as well as reflecting community ties.

46 Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrats also proposed retaining the existing council size of 55. They argued that 55 members "is an appropriate number to ensure efficient representation across a wide and diverse area".

47 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed reducing the size of the council to 44, eleven fewer than at present. They argued that the current council size of 55 is large and unwieldy and that local parties have difficulty finding dedicated members to run for council election. They also considered that a smaller council size would be more cost effective and the resultant increase in the average number of electors per councillor would not adversely affect the representational role of councillors.

48 We received two other representations which made specific reference to the issue of council size. Kesgrave Town Council accepted the District Council's proposal to retain the existing council size of 55. Martlesham Parish Council expressed a preference for reducing the current council size by five to 50, in order to facilitate the retention of a two-member Martlesham ward.

49 In our draft recommendations report we considered all the evidence received in relation to the most appropriate council size for Suffolk Coastal district. While we noted the views of Councillors Hall and Howard, we were not persuaded by the evidence received that the existing council size fails to secure effective and convenient local government. Furthermore, we found no evidence of significant local support for a reduction in council size. Indeed, both the District Council and the Liberal Democrats argued for the retention of the current council size. Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 55 members.

50 At Stage Three Felixstowe Town Council proposed increasing the size of the council to 56, one more than at present, which would enable Felixstowe to be represented by 12 members. The District Council, the Labour Group and West End of Felixstowe (South) Residents' Association supported the Town Council's proposed increase in council size. However, as clearly stated in the draft recommendations report and below, Felixstowe is entitled to 11.5 councillors currently and 11.2 councillors in five years time. We are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendations for a council size of 55 as final.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

51 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including district-wide schemes submitted by the District Council, the Liberal Democrats, and Councillors Hall and Howard. From these representations a number of considerations emerged which helped to inform us in preparing our draft recommendations.

52 We noted that all three district-wide schemes received at Stage One provided for a significant improvement in the level of electoral equality for the district as a whole. However, our proposed council size of 55 limited the extent to which we were able to consider the proposals submitted by Councillors Hall and Howard, which were based on a council size of 44.

53 We noted that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats concurred in their proposals for retaining the existing council size and proposed warding arrangements for the northern and south-western parts of the district. However, the District Council proposed retaining 12 councillors for the town of Felixstowe, while the Liberal Democrats proposed that Felixstowe should be represented by 11 councillors. As a result of their proposals for Felixstowe, the allocation of councillors for the remaining part of the district would also differ under the two proposals, with an additional councillor being allocated to the rural areas of the district under the Liberal Democrats' scheme.

54 We noted that, under our proposed council size of 55, Felixstowe is entitled to 11.5 councillors currently and 11.2 councillors by 2005. The District Council's proposal for 12 councillors for Felixstowe would result in a degree of over-representation in an area which is unlikely to experience any significant growth in electorate in the near future. We considered that the Liberal Democrats' proposal for 11 councillors representing the Felixstowe town area would result in the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria for the district as a whole.

55 In the light of these considerations, we proposed basing our draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrats' submission. However, in seeking to build on these proposals to improve electoral equality further and having regard to the statutory criteria, we decided to move away from the Liberal Democrats' proposals in the south-western part of the district. We also put forward our own proposals in the Felixstowe area.

56 At Stage Three our draft recommendations received a degree of local support and we propose that they should be substantially endorsed, subject to four amendments. In the light of evidence received we have decided to move away from our draft recommendations in three areas in order

to better reflect community identities and interests. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Felixstowe Town (six wards);
- (b) Kirton, Nacton and Trimleys wards;
- (c) Rushmere, Kesgrave and Martlesham wards;
- (d) Woodbridge (five wards);
- (e) Bealings, Grundisburgh & Witlesham, Hasketon and Otley wards;
- (f) Alderton & Sutton, Melton, Ufford and Wickham Market wards;
- (g) Hollesley, Orford and Tunstall wards;
- (h) Dennington, Earl Soham, Framlingham and Glemham wards;
- (i) Aldeburgh, Buxlow and Snape wards;
- (j) Kelsale, Leiston and Saxmundham wards;
- (k) Bramfield & Cratfield, Walberswick, Westleton and Yoxford wards.

57 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A, and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

### **Felixstowe town (six wards)**

58 The town of Felixstowe is located along the south-eastern coast of the district and currently comprises six wards, each represented by two councillors. Under existing arrangements, Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North and Felixstowe South East have 6 per cent, 11 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent, 13 per cent and 12 per cent fewer by 2005). Felixstowe Central and Felixstowe South wards are also over-represented with 15 per cent and 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (17 per cent and 16 per cent fewer by 2005). Due to recent housing developments, Felixstowe West ward has 29 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (27 per cent more by 2005).

59 At Stage One the District Council based its proposals on those submitted by Felixstowe Town Council which proposed that the Felixstowe area should be represented by 12 district councillors. It proposed broadly retaining the existing pattern of six two-member wards, and argued that they “form a robust basis for the new warding structure”. The District Council proposed revised Felixstowe West, Felixstowe Central, Felixstowe South and Felixstowe East wards. The Council also proposed enlarging Felixstowe North ward and proposed a revised two-member Felixstowe South East ward. Under the District Council’s proposals, Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North and Felixstowe South would each have 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent, 8 per cent and 7 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005). Felixstowe Central and Felixstowe South East ward would have 6 per cent and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent and 5 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Felixstowe West ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average, both now and in five years’ time.

60 The Liberal Democrats proposed that Felixstowe should be represented by 11 councillors, rather than 12 as at present, but did not provide any detailed warding arrangements for this area.

61 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed that Felixstowe should be represented by nine councillors, based on a council size of 44, although they did not provide detailed warding arrangements.

62 We carefully considered the representations received during Stage One and a number of considerations emerged. We noted that there was a lack of consensus regarding the most appropriate number of councillors to represent the Felixstowe area. Based on our proposed council size of 55, we noted that Felixstowe is entitled to 11.5 councillors currently and 11.2 councillors in five years' time. Therefore, the District Council's proposals would result in an over-representation of Felixstowe, an area which is unlikely to experience any significant growth in electorate in the near future. As we seek to recommend warding arrangements which improve over time, we considered that Felixstowe should be represented by 11 councillors, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats.

63 In our draft recommendations we noted, however, that the Liberal Democrats did not provide detailed warding proposals for Felixstowe, and we therefore put forward our own proposals for this area, building on the existing warding structure. We proposed revised Felixstowe West and Felixstowe South wards and also proposed a revised two-member Felixstowe North ward. We also proposed enlarging Felixstowe East ward and proposed a revised two-member Felixstowe South East ward. Under our proposals, Felixstowe Central ward would no longer exist. Under our draft recommendations, Felixstowe East, Felixstowe South and Felixstowe South East wards would initially have 4 per cent, 7 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 3 per cent, 5 per cent and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005. Felixstowe North and Felixstowe West wards would have 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent fewer and equal to the average respectively by 2005). We recognised that our proposals for this area differed from those submitted at Stage One and we welcomed local views regarding this area at Stage Three.

64 At Stage Three we noted that our draft recommendations for this area had been the subject of some local opposition. The District Council objected to our proposed 11-member scheme for the Felixstowe area and expressed support for Felixstowe Town Council's Option One which proposed a 12-member representation of Felixstowe. The District Council argued that Felixstowe should continue to be represented by 12 District Councillors representing six wards as it was "important to retain an even number of district councillors for Felixstowe in order to avoid the problems that would arise from splitting the parish into wards with unequal representation". The District Council stated that if the Commission was not minded to accept Option One, then it would support Felixstowe Town Council's Option Two which proposed 11 members for the Felixstowe area.

65 Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council expressed broad support for the Commission's draft recommendations in the Felixstowe area. The Liberal Democrats stated that while they could not support the arguments put forward by the District Council and Felixstowe Town Council to increase the overall council size from 55 to 56, they would however, support Felixstowe Town Council's Option Two (as discussed below).

66 The Labour Group on the District Council expressed support for Felixstowe Town Council's Option One but stated that should Option One not be acceptable to the Commission, then it would support Felixstowe Town Council's Option Two (as discussed below).

67 Felixstowe Town Council opposed the Commission's draft recommendations for the town of Felixstowe and proposed an increase in the number of district councillors from 55 to 56 to enable Felixstowe to be represented by 12 members. The Town Council provided two sets of proposals for warding arrangements in Felixstowe. Option One proposed six two-member wards (and was the preferred option of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Felixstowe Town Council and the Labour Group). The Town Council argued that all arrangements involving 11 councillors would have considerable difficulties attached, particularly because an odd number of councillors "means that it is impossible to achieve an equal number of councillors in each ward and this inevitably distorts the representational pattern of the wards".

68 Felixstowe Town Council's Option Two proposed an 11-member scheme for Felixstowe (if the increase in council size to 56 was not accepted) and was supported by the Liberal Democrats. It argued that the Commission's draft recommendations for Felixstowe did not "reflect the best achievable community boundaries" and proposed some minor modifications to our proposed Felixstowe wards. Under Option Two, Felixstowe East, Felixstowe South, Felixstowe South East, Felixstowe North and Felixstowe West wards would initially have 10 per cent more, 11 per cent more, 12 per cent more, 4 per cent fewer and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent more, 9 per cent more, 8 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer and 5 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

69 Kesgrave Town Council and Wickham Market Parish Council expressed broad support for our proposals in the Felixstowe area. Councillors Dangerfield and Paddick (Felixstowe West) and a local resident also supported the Commission's draft recommendations for the Felixstowe area. Councillor Smith (Felixstowe Central) proposed an alternative scheme based on 11 district councillors representing six wards in Felixstowe. West End of Felixstowe (South) Residents' Association opposed our proposals to reduce the number of councillors in Felixstowe from 12 to 11. Suffolk Association of Local Councils opposed our draft recommendations on a district wide basis, but made no specific comment in relation to this area.

70 Having carefully considered the evidence received and having re-visited the area, we propose confirming our draft recommendations for Felixstowe as final. We note that several respondents opposed our draft recommendations for the town. However, we have not been persuaded that we should increase the council size to 56, so that Felixstowe could be allocated 12 members. Likewise, we are not convinced that the alternative scheme for 11 members would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. Given that the railway line would be straddled by a ward with only one road linking the two sides and the higher electoral variances which would result, we are content therefore to confirm our draft recommendations for Felixstowe as final. Under our final recommendations Felixstowe East, Felixstowe South and Felixstowe South East wards would initially have 4 per cent, 7 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 3 per cent, 5 per cent and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005. Felixstowe North and Felixstowe West wards would both have 1 per cent more electors per

councillor than the district average (1 per cent fewer and equal to the average respectively by 2005). Details of our final recommendations are shown on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

### **Kirton, Nacton and Trimleys wards**

71 The three wards of Kirton, Nacton and Trimleys are located in the south of the district, to the north-west of Felixstowe town. Kirton ward is represented by a single councillor and comprises the five parishes of Falkenham, Hemley, Kirton, Newbourne and Waldringfield. Nacton ward is also represented by a single councillor and contains the seven parishes of Brightwell, Bucklesham, Foxhall, Levington, Nacton, Purdis Farm and Stratton Hall. Trimleys ward is represented by two councillors and comprises Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary parishes. Under existing arrangements, Nacton and Trimleys wards are significantly under-represented with 63 per cent and 33 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (61 per cent and 30 per cent more by 2005). Kirton ward has 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average and this level of electoral equality is expected to remain unchanged over the next five years.

72 At Stage One, the District Council, with support from the Liberal Democrats, proposed creating a new three-member Trimleys with Kirton ward and a revised two-member Nacton ward. Under the District Council's proposals, Nacton and Trimleys with Kirton wards would have 1 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more than the average by 2005).

73 The Liberal Democrats, with support from Kirton & Falkenham Parish Council, also proposed additional alternative warding arrangements for this area. They proposed retaining the existing Kirton ward, creating a single-member Purdis ward, and a three-member Trimleys with Nacton ward. Under the Liberal Democrats' alternative proposals, Kirton, Purdis Farm and Trimleys with Nacton wards would have 1 per cent more, 9 per cent fewer and 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more than the district average respectively by 2005).

74 Based on a council size of 44, Councillors Hall and Howard proposed an alternative configuration of wards in this area. Under their proposals no ward would have an electoral variances of more than 4 per cent from the average by 2005.

75 In our draft recommendations report we noted that our proposed council size of 55 limited the extent to which we are able to consider the proposals submitted by Councillors Hall and Howard. While we noted the concerns expressed by the grouped parish council of Kirton & Falkenham, that the parishes in Kirton ward were rural and the Trimleys were more urban. We also noted that their preferred option, identical to the Liberal Democrats' alternative option, would result in relatively higher electoral variances than the warding arrangements proposed by District Council and supported by the Liberal Democrats.

76 In the light of these considerations we were content to put forward the District Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposed two-member Nacton and three-member Trimleys with Kirton wards as part of our draft recommendations. Under our proposed council size of 55, Nacton and

Trimleys with Kirton wards would have 1 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more than the average by 2005).

77 At Stage Three, the District Council and Suffolk County Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but made no specific comment in relation to this area. Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council largely supported our draft recommendations but expressed concern over the “marked difference in community identities” between the more urban Trimleys and the rural communities of Falkenham and Kirton. The Liberal Democrats reiterated their Stage One alternative warding arrangements for this area, arguing that the grouped parishes of Kirton and Falkenham have no community links with the Trimleys area. Suffolk Association of Local Councils opposed our draft recommendations on a district-wide basis, but made no specific comment in relation to this area.

78 We received three further representations in relation to this area. The grouped parish council of Kirton & Falkenham opposed the Commission’s draft recommendations for the proposed Trimleys with Kirton ward, arguing that there was “district-wide opposition” to our proposals. Two local residents opposed our draft recommendations for this area, arguing that the proposed Trimleys with Kirton ward did not reflect the identities and interests of local communities and did not secure effective and convenient local government.

79 We recognise the concerns expressed by some respondents, but in the absence of any viable alternative proposals we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final. We are content that our proposals would clearly address the levels of electoral inequality in the existing Nacton and Trimleys wards. Under our final recommendations Nacton and Trimleys with Kirton wards would have 1 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more than the average by 2005). Details of our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Rushmere, Kesgrave and Martlesham wards**

80 The three wards of Kesgrave, Martlesham and Rushmere are located in the south-western part of the district and each comprise the parishes of the same names. These wards cover established urban areas on the eastern fringe of Ipswich borough. Kesgrave is a three-member ward, Martlesham is a single-member ward and Rushmere is represented by two councillors. Under existing warding arrangements, Kesgrave and Rushmere are under-represented with 35 per cent and 39 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (51 per cent and 36 per cent more by 2005). Martlesham ward has the highest electoral variance in the district, with 158 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (136 per cent more by 2005).

81 At Stage One, the District Council, with support from the Liberal Democrats, proposed creating five new wards for this area. It proposed a two-member Rushmere St Andrew ward, a one-member Kesgrave West & East Rushmere St Andrew ward, two two-member Kesgrave Central and Kesgrave East wards and a revised two-member Martlesham ward. It proposed combining the remaining part of Martlesham ward, with the adjoining area of Woodbridge Riverside ward to form a new single-member Woodbridge South & Martlesham North ward, as

discussed in further detail below. Under the District Council's proposals, Kesgrave Central and Kesgrave East wards would have 12 per cent more and 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent more than the average in both wards by 2005). Kesgrave West & East Rushmere St Andrew and Martlesham wards would both have 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially (8 per cent and 1 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005). Rushmere St Andrew ward would have 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (10 per cent fewer by 2005).

82 Based on a council size of 44, Councillors Hall and Howard proposed an alternative configuration of wards in this area, although they did not provide any detailed warding arrangements.

83 Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council strongly opposed the District Council's proposals to combine parts of Rushmere St Andrew and Kesgrave parishes in a single ward, and proposed creating a three-member Rushmere St Andrew ward. It also suggested the option of combining Rushmere St Andrew parish with either The Bealings or Nacton wards, but noted that this would result in relatively high electoral variances.

84 Kesgrave Town Council also opposed the District Council's proposed West Kesgrave & East Rushmere ward, and proposed a two-member West Kesgrave and a three-member East Kesgrave ward. Kesgrave Parish Council also favoured retaining a separate ward for Rushmere St Andrew parish, to be represented by three councillors.

85 Martlesham Parish Council stated it would "regret any division of the parish" and that its preference would be to retain a two-member Martlesham ward, based on a reduction in council size from 55 to 50 members for the district. A local resident argued that the Seckford Heights area in the north of Martlesham ward has more in common with Woodbridge than other parts of Martlesham, and that it should form part of a Woodbridge ward.

86 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and a number of considerations emerged. We noted that our proposed council size of 55 limited the extent to which we were able to consider Councillors Hall and Howard's proposals for this area.

87 We noted that there was some opposition to the District Council's proposed West Kesgrave & East Rushmere St Andrew ward. We also noted that, under a council size of 55, the existing Rushmere ward would have a reasonable level of electoral equality if its representation was increased from two to three councillors. Further, we noted that both Rushmere and Kesgrave parish councils favoured retaining a Rushmere ward (renamed Rushmere St Andrew). In the light of these considerations, we proposed retaining the existing Rushmere ward and increasing its representation from two to three councillors. We also proposed that it should be renamed Rushmere St Andrew ward.

88 We noted Kesgrave Parish Council's proposals for the Kesgrave area and considered that they would provide for a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We also noted that our proposed Rushmere St Andrew ward limited the extent to which we were able to consider, in some respects, the District Council's proposals for this area. We therefore proposed creating two wards for the Kesgrave area: a two-member Kesgrave West ward and a

three-member Kesgrave East ward, as broadly proposed by Kesgrave Parish Council. We proposed transferring some 280 electors from the existing Martlesham ward to our proposed Kesgrave East ward, to better reflect community ties in this area, and to provide a more clearly identifiable boundary.

89 We noted that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats concurred with regard to their proposals in the Martlesham area. We also noted Martlesham Parish Council's preference for retaining the existing Martlesham ward, and noted that the District Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals would result in the division of the Martlesham village area between district wards.

90 In view of these considerations we proposed revised warding arrangements which we considered would better reflect the balance of the evidence submitted at Stage One. We proposed a revised two-member Martlesham ward which would provide for a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We also proposed transferring part of Martlesham ward to a new Riverside ward, as discussed in further detail below. Under our draft recommendations, Kesgrave West and Rushmere St Andrew wards would both have 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (10 per cent and 9 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Kesgrave East and Martlesham wards would initially have 23 per cent fewer and 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving significantly to 6 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005.

91 At Stage Three, Suffolk Coastal District Council generally accepted the Commission's draft recommendations but proposed an amendment to the boundary between the proposed Martlesham and Riverside wards to retain the Top Street area in Martlesham. The District Council proposed a minor modification to our proposed boundary between the two wards, stating that the 19 electors in the Top Street area would "not make a significant difference" to the electoral equality of Martlesham and Riverside wards. Under its proposals the proposed boundary between Martlesham and Riverside wards would follow the Dukes Park and Seckford Heights developments to the B1438 and following this road south to meet the existing ward boundary. Under the District Council's proposals Martlesham and Riverside wards would have 17 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 6 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer in 2005.

92 The District Council also opposed the Commission's proposal to further ward Martlesham parish, arguing that our draft recommendations would be improved if the proposed parish wards were amalgamated into a single ward. It also opposed the proposed inclusion of Martlesham West parish ward in the proposed Kesgrave East district ward and stated that the area "is an integral part of Martlesham", is not "relatively isolated" from Martlesham and should therefore remain in Martlesham ward. The District Council stated, however, that were the Commission not minded to accept this proposal, it would still request a minor boundary modification, affecting no electors, in the east of the ward. The District Council stated that this area is part of a protected "green wedge" of countryside. Under the District Council's proposals Kesgrave East and Martlesham wards would have 26 per cent fewer and 22 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent fewer and 11 per cent more by 2005).

93 Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council largely supported the Commission's draft recommendations but agreed with the District Council's proposals to include the Top Street and Deben Avenue areas in Martlesham ward. While the Liberal Democrats supported the Commission's proposal to transfer Martlesham West parish ward to Kesgrave East on the grounds that it would provide for a "more clearly identifiable boundary", they stated that retaining the Deben Avenue area in Martlesham ward would "better reflect community identity and interests".

94 Suffolk County Council broadly supported the Commission's draft recommendations but commented that the ward boundaries between Kesgrave, Martlesham and Woodbridge should be coterminous with parish boundaries. Kesgrave Town Council largely supported our draft recommendations but opposed the warding of Kesgrave as a result of the proposed Kesgrave East and Kesgrave West district wards. Woodbridge Town Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but proposed including the residents of Top Street in our proposed Martlesham ward. Martlesham Parish Council opposed the Commission's proposals to ward Martlesham on the grounds that warding the parish would not reflect community identities in the Martlesham area and would be "detrimental" to the unity of Martlesham. The parish council also objected to our proposal to include Top Street in a revised Riverside ward and Martlesham West parish ward in a revised Kesgrave East ward, on the grounds of community interest and identity. The parish council submitted an alternative boundary for the proposed Riverside ward, similar to that proposed by the District Council.

95 Councillor Kelso (Martlesham ward) opposed the Commission's draft recommendations for the Martlesham area and supported the District Council's proposals. In his submission, Councillor Kelso included the results of a survey he carried out to ascertain the views of Martlesham residents on the District Council's proposals. Suffolk Association of Local Councils opposed our draft recommendations on a district wide basis, but made no specific comment in relation to this area. 30 local residents also opposed the Commission's draft recommendations for Kesgrave East ward. Martlesham Consultants Ltd also opposed the proposed Kesgrave East ward and argued that the area they manage would be divided between two district wards. Martlesham Consultants proposed a minor boundary modification, affecting no electors, between Kesgrave East and Martlesham ward which would ensure that the land the company owns is entirely in Martlesham ward. Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council supported our draft recommendations for Rushmere St Andrew ward.

96 Having carefully considered the evidence presented to us at Stage Three, we propose broadly confirming our draft recommendations, subject to several amendments. We note the concerns expressed by Suffolk Coastal District Council, Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrats, Woodbridge Town Council and Martlesham Parish Council and five local residents in relation to our proposed Riverside and Martlesham wards. Having re-examined our draft recommendations we have been persuaded by the evidence received to make an amendment to our proposed Martlesham and Riverside wards and include the electors in the Top Street area in the proposed Martlesham ward. We also note that the proposal to retain Top Street in Martlesham ward has received a degree of local support and we are therefore content to put it forward as part of our final recommendations. We also note the concerns expressed by Suffolk Coastal District Council and Martlesham Parish

Council in relation to our proposed parish warding of Martlesham ward and are content to propose modified parish warding arrangements as part of our final recommendations (please see paragraphs 189-190).

97 We also note the concerns expressed by Suffolk Coastal District Council, Councillor Kelso, Martlesham Parish Council, Martlesham Consultants Ltd and 30 local residents in relation to our proposed Kesgrave East ward. However, coupled with the support of Kesgrave Town Council and the adverse affect on electoral equality to which the retention of this area in Martlesham ward would give rise, we remain of the opinion that Martlesham West parish ward is relatively isolated from the remainder of the Martlesham ward. We are content therefore, to endorse our draft recommendations for this area subject to a minor boundary amendment (affecting no electors) in the east of the ward, as proposed by the District Council. We are unable to adopt the proposal put forward by Martlesham Consultants Ltd, as part of their proposed boundary would not be tied to ground detail. Under our final recommendations Kesgrave West and Rushmere St Andrew wards would both have 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (10 per cent and 9 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Kesgrave East and Martlesham wards would initially have 23 per cent fewer and 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving significantly to 6 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005. Details of our final recommendations are on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

### **Woodbridge (five wards)**

98 The Woodbridge town area is currently represented by five district wards, each represented by a single councillor. Under existing arrangements, Woodbridge Centre and Woodbridge Farlingaye wards have 13 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (16 per cent and 12 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Woodbridge Kyson, Woodbridge Riverside and Woodbridge Seckford wards are significantly over-represented, with 42 per cent, 28 per cent and 33 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (44 per cent, 32 per cent and 31 per cent fewer by 2005).

99 At Stage One, the District Council, with support from the Liberal Democrats, proposed significant changes in this area and proposed creating four new single-member wards, Woodbridge South & Martlesham North, Seckford, Kyson and Farlingaye wards. Under its proposals Farlingaye, Kyson, Seckford and Woodbridge South & North Martlesham wards would have 1 per cent, 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 1 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

100 Based on a council size of 44, Councillors Hall and Howard proposed that three councillors should represent the Woodbridge town area, together with Hasketon parish, but they did not provide any detailed warding proposals.

101 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we noted that our proposed Martlesham ward limited the extent to which we were able to consider the District Council's proposed Woodbridge South & Martlesham North ward in its entirety. We recognised

that the northern part of Martlesham ward has a strong affinity with the adjoining area of Woodbridge and considered that they should form part of the same ward.

102 We therefore proposed creating a single-member Riverside ward similar to the District Council's Woodbridge South & Martlesham North ward, as detailed earlier. We considered that the District Council's proposed single-member Kyson, Farlingaye and Seckford wards would provide for a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and were content to put them forward as part of our draft recommendations, subject to a number of boundary amendments. We considered that our amendments would provide for improved electoral equality for the Woodbridge area as a whole under our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations, Farlingaye, Kyson, Riverside and Seckford wards would have 4 per cent, 3 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than that district average respectively (6 per cent, 4 per cent, 5 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). We recognised that our proposals for this area departed, to an extent, from the proposals submitted at Stage One and welcomed further local views at Stage Three.

103 At Stage Three, the District Council, with support from the Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, Woodbridge Town Council, Martlesham Parish Council, Councillor Kelso (Martlesham ward) and five local residents, broadly supported our draft recommendations for the Woodbridge area, but proposed an amendment to our proposed Riverside ward as previously discussed. Suffolk County Council broadly supported the Commission's draft recommendations and commented that the ward boundaries between Kesgrave, Martlesham and Woodbridge should be coterminous with parish boundaries. Suffolk Association of Local Councils opposed our draft recommendations on a district-wide basis, but made no specific comment in relation to this area.

104 Having carefully considered all the evidence received we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for the Woodbridge area as final, subject to a minor amendment as previously discussed. Under our final recommendations Farlingaye, Kyson, Riverside and Seckford wards would have 4 per cent, 3 per cent, 2 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than that district average respectively (6 per cent, 4 per cent, 6 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Details of our final recommendations are on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

### **Bealings, Grundisburgh & Witnesham, Hasketon and Otley wards**

105 Bealings, Grundisburgh & Witnesham, Hasketon and Otley wards are located in the western part of Suffolk Coastal, adjacent to the district boundary with Mid Suffolk district. Each ward is currently represented by a single councillor. Bealings ward comprises the five parishes of Great Bealings, Little Bealings, Playford, Tuddenham St Martin and Westerfield, while Grundisburgh & Witnesham ward contains the four parishes of Culpho, Grundisburgh, Swiland and Witnesham. Otley ward contains Clopton, Cretingham, Hoo, Monewden and Otley parishes, while Hasketon ward contains Burgh, Boulge, Bredfield, Charsfield, Dallinghoo, Debach and Hasketon parishes. Under existing arrangements, Bealings, Hasketon and Otley wards have 13 per cent, 22 per cent and 33 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (15 per cent, 24 per cent and 31 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

Grundisburgh & Winesham ward is under-represented, with 22 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (18 per cent more by 2005).

106 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a revised warding arrangements for single-member Otley, Earl Soham, Grundisburgh and Winesham wards. The District Council also proposed a new two-member Melton & Hasketon ward. Under the District Council's proposals, Earl Soham Grundisburgh and Winesham wards would have 4 per cent fewer 9 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent, 7 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Melton & Hasketon and Otley wards would have 5 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively, both now and by 2005.

107 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised single-member Otley ward and strongly opposed the District Council's proposals to combine the rural parish of Hasketon with the much larger urban area of Melton. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals Pettistree parish would form part of a new Rendlesham ward, as detailed below. The Liberal Democrats also submitted three alternative options for the existing Bealings and Grundisburgh & Winesham wards. Option One proposed two new single-member Grundisburgh and Winesham wards, identical to the District Council's proposals for this area. Option Two proposed a revised two-member Grundisburgh & Winesham ward comprising the existing Bealings and Grundisburgh & Winesham wards. Option Three proposed a revised two-member Grundisburgh & Winesham ward comprising the existing Bealings and Grundisburgh & Winesham wards and Burgh parish (currently in Hasketon ward).

108 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Otley ward would have 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, both now and by 2005. The single-member Grundisburgh and Winesham wards, as proposed under Option One, would have 9 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). A two-member Grundisburgh & Winesham ward, as proposed under the Liberal Democrats' Option Two, would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (2 per cent more than the average by 2005). A two-member Grundisburgh & Winesham ward including Burgh parish, as proposed under the Liberal Democrats' Option Three, would have 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent more than the average by 2005). The revised Otley ward would have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, both initially and by 2005.

109 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed creating new single-member Winesham & Bealings, Otley & Grundisburgh and Brandeston & Easton wards. Under their proposed council size of 44, their proposed wards would have electoral variances of no more than 3 per cent from the average by 2005.

110 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and noted that all the proposals submitted would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality in this area. We noted, however, that our proposed council size of 55 limited the extent to which we were able to consider Councillors Hall and Howard's proposals for this area.

111 The District Council and the Liberal Democrats differed in their proposals for Otley ward with particular regard to Pettistree parish. We concurred with the Liberal Democrats' assessment of the Hasketon and Melton areas and were content therefore, to put forward the Liberal Democrats' proposed Otley ward as part of our draft recommendations.

112 We noted that the District Council's proposed Grundisburgh and Winesham wards were supported by the Liberal Democrats and would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality in this area. We were content therefore, to put forward the District Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposed single-member Grundisburgh and Winesham wards as part of our draft recommendations. We also proposed that Charsfield, Cretingham, Monewden and Hoo parishes should form part of a revised Earl Soham ward, as discussed in further detail below. Under our draft recommendations, Grundisburgh and Winesham wards would have 9 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Otley ward would have 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, both now and by 2005.

113 At Stage Three, the District Council, Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and Suffolk County Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but made no specific comments in relation to this area.

114 We received four further representations in relation to this area at Stage Three. County Councillor Bestow (Carlford division) expressed broad support for our proposed Grundisburgh and Winesham wards. However, Councillor Bestow expressed a preference to retain Great Bealings, Little Bealings and Playford parishes in one ward, arguing that the three parishes share community interests and identities, but did not specify in which ward the parishes should remain. Swilland & Winesham Grouped Parish Council expressed support for our proposed Winesham ward.

115 Grundisburgh & Culpho Parish Council opposed the Commission's draft recommendations to include Burgh parish in a revised Otley ward and reiterated their Stage One proposal to include Burgh parish in Grundisburgh ward, arguing that Burgh has close community interests with Grundisburgh. Little Bealings Parish Council opposed our draft recommendations for modifying the existing Bealings ward and including Great Bealings and Little Bealings parishes in our proposed Grundisburgh ward, arguing that there would "continuously be an imbalance due to possible future housing building programmes". The parish council expressed support for retaining the current warding arrangements for Bealings ward, but submitted no new evidence or argumentation. Suffolk Association of Local Councils opposed our draft recommendations on a district-wide basis, but made no specific comment in relation to this area.

116 Having carefully considered all the evidence received, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for the area as final. We recognise that concerns expressed by Grundisburgh & Culpho Parish Council in relation to our proposed Grundisburgh ward. However, we note that while Otley ward would have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average both now and in 2005, Grundisburgh ward would have 19 per cent more electors per councillor (16 per cent more by 2005). We have not been persuaded by the evidence received that the inclusion of Burgh parish in the proposed Grundisburgh ward would justify such high levels of electoral inequality and propose confirming our proposed Grundisburgh ward as final. We also

note the concerns of Little Bealings Parish Council, but in the light of no new evidence or further argumentation, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. Under our final recommendations Grundisburgh and Winesham wards would have 9 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Otley ward would have 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, both now and by 2005. Details of our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Alderton & Sutton, Melton, Ufford and Wickham Market wards**

117 The three wards of Melton, Ufford and Wickham Market are situated to the north of Woodbridge town, around the A12 trunk road, and are each represented by a single councillor. The single-member Alderton & Sutton ward is located to the east of the River Deben and is traversed by the B1083 from south to north. Melton and Wickham Market wards are each coterminous with the parishes of the same name. Alderton & Sutton ward comprises the five parishes of Alderton, Bawdsey, Ramsholt, Shottisham and Sutton, while Ufford ward comprises the four parishes of Bromeswell, Eyke, Pettistree and Ufford. Under existing arrangements, Alderton & Sutton and Ufford wards have 16 per cent and 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (18 per cent and 23 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Melton ward is significantly under-represented with 70 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (71 per cent more by 2005), while Wickham Market ward has 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (6 per cent more by 2005).

118 At Stage One, the District Council proposed retaining a single-member Wickham Market ward, and proposed creating a two-member Melton & Hasketon ward comprising Melton and Hasketon parishes. The District Council proposed transferring Pettistree parish to a revised Otley ward, as detailed above. It proposed combining Ufford and Bromeswell parishes with Sutton parish (currently in Alderton & Sutton ward) to form a new single-member Sutton ward and including Eyke parish in a new single-member Rendlesham ward, as detailed below. Under the District Council's proposals, Melton & Hasketon, Sutton and Wickham Market wards would have 5 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent fewer, 7 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005).

119 The Liberal Democrats proposed combining Melton and Ufford parishes to form a new two-member Melton & Ufford ward. They also proposed retaining the existing single-member Wickham Market ward, as proposed by the District Council, and creating a new single-member Sutton ward comprising the existing Alderton & Sutton ward and Bromeswell parish. They also proposed transferring Eyke parish to a new single-member Hollesley with Eyke ward, as detailed below. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Melton & Ufford, Sutton and Wickham Market wards would have 5 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005).

120 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed an alternative configuration of wards in this area. Based on a council size of 44, no ward would have electoral variances of more than 5 per cent from the district average by 2005.

121 Wickham Market Parish Council supported the District Council's proposal to retain the existing Wickham Market ward, and Bawdsey Parish Council favoured retaining the existing warding arrangements in their area.

122 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We noted that our proposed council size of 55 limited the extent to which we were able to consider the proposals put forward by Councillors Hall and Howard. We also noted that, as a result of our proposal to include Hasketon parish in a revised Otley ward, as detailed previously, we were unable to put forward the District Council's proposals for the existing Melton and Ufford wards. We noted, however, that the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Wickham Market Parish Council proposed retaining the existing Wickham Market ward. Under a council size of 55, this ward would have a reasonable level of electoral equality both now and in five years' time, and we were content to put it forward as part of our draft recommendations.

123 We noted that the Liberal Democrats' proposals would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality for this area and concurred with their assessment that combining Melton and Ufford parishes for district warding purposes would provide for a good balance between the electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We also noted that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Sutton ward reflected, to an extent, the views of Bawdsey Parish Council. We were content therefore to put forward their proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations, Melton & Ufford and Wickham Market wards would have 5 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 4 per cent and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005. Sutton ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (3 per cent fewer by 2005).

124 At Stage Three, the District Council and Suffolk County Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but made no specific comments in relation to this area. Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council also expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but noted that residents in Ufford were concerned that "they could lose their strong rural identity" if included in a ward with Melton. The Liberal Democrats expressed support for a separate Ufford & Melton 'village' ward to address the concerns of residents in Ufford. Suffolk Association of Local Councils opposed our draft recommendations on a district-wide basis, but made no specific comment in relation to this area.

125 Melton Parish Council strongly supported our proposed Melton & Ufford ward, arguing that the resulting improvement in electoral equality was both "welcomed and sensible" and provided a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. The parish council also stated that the areas of Melton and Ufford are linked by the local road network. Ufford Parish Council opposed the Commission's proposed Melton & Ufford ward and expressed support for two single-member wards, but provided no detailed evidence or argumentation. It argued that our proposals would not reflect the "best interests of the parish". Eyke Parish Council stated a preference for being combined with similar rural parishes and not Rendlesham.

126 Bawdsey Parish Council expressed support for our proposed Sutton ward and stated that the inclusion of Bromswell parish would "preserve the balance of the existing ward". Sutton Parish

Council opposed our proposed Sutton ward, arguing that under our proposals rural wards would be “swallowed up” by urban wards, but provided no new evidence or alternative warding arrangements. Wickham Market Parish Council generally supported the Commission’s draft recommendations and expressed specific support for the Commission’s proposals to retain the existing Wickham Market ward.

127 Having carefully considered all the evidence received, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for the area as final, subject to one amendment (the inclusion of Pettistree parish in our proposed Melton & Ufford ward). We recognise the concerns of the Liberal Democrats and Ufford Parish Council, but coupled with the support of Melton Parish Council and in the light of no viable alternative, we have not been persuaded that Melton and Ufford should form two single-member wards. Under our final recommendations Melton & Ufford and Wickham Market wards would have 10 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 9 per cent and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005. Sutton ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (3 per cent fewer by 2005). Details of our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Hollesley, Orford and Tunstall wards**

128 The three wards of Hollesley, Orford and Tunstall are located in the south-east of the district, in the area surrounding the Butley River and to the south of the River Alde. Each ward is currently represented by a single councillor. Hollesley ward contains the five parishes of Boyton, Butley, Capel St Andrew, Hollesley and Wantisden. Orford ward comprises the four parishes of Gedgrave, Iken, Orford and Sudbourne, while Tunstall contains the five parishes of Blaxhall, Campsey Ash, Chillesford, Rendlesham and Tunstall. Under existing arrangements Hollesley and Orford wards are over-represented, with 23 per cent and 38 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (26 per cent and 36 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Tunstall ward is under-represented, with 23 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (28 per cent more by 2005).

129 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a revised single-member Orford ward comprising the existing ward and Chillesford and Tunstall parishes from the existing Tunstall ward, and a revised single-member Hollesley ward comprising Boyton and Hollesley parishes (currently in Hollesley ward) and Alderton, Bawdsey, Ramsholt and Shottisham parishes. The District Council also proposed a new single-member Rendlesham ward comprising Butley, Capel St Andrew and Wantisden parishes, Rendlesham parish and Eyke parish. Under the District Council’s proposals, Blaxhall parish would form part of a revised single-member Snape ward and Campsey Ash parish would form part of a new single-member Campsey Ash ward, as detailed below. The District Council’s proposed Hollesley, Orford and Rendlesham wards would have 7 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer and equal to the district average by 2005).

130 The Liberal Democrats proposed a new single-member Orford & Tunstall ward comprising the existing ward and Blaxhall and Tunstall parishes, a new single-member Hollesley with Eyke ward comprising the existing ward, Chillesford parish and Eyke parish. Under their proposals Rendlesham, Campsey Ash and Pettistree parishes would form a new single-member Rendlesham ward. The Liberal Democrats’ proposed Hollesley with Eyke, Orford & Tunstall and Rendlesham

wards would have 1 per cent, 2 per cent and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

131 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed an alternative configuration of wards in this area based on a council size of 44. Under their proposals, no ward would have an electoral variance of more than 9 per cent from the district average by 2005.

132 Campsey Ash Parish Council argued that the parish has little affinity with the area to the north of the A12 and favoured retaining the parish's current association with Rendlesham.

133 We gave careful consideration to the submissions received at Stage One. We noted that the proposals submitted by the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Councillors Hall and Howard would all result in a significant improvement in electoral equality in this area. We noted, however, that our proposed council size of 55 limited the extent to which we were able to consider Councillors Hall and Howard's proposals for this area.

134 We noted that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Rendlesham ward would retain Campsey Ash parish in the same ward as Rendlesham, whereas the District Council proposed combining it with areas to the north of the A12. We also noted the views expressed by Campsey Ash Parish Council and concurred with their assessment that the parish has little affinity with the areas to the north of the A12. In the light of these considerations, and in view of our proposals for a single-member Sutton ward, as discussed previously, we proposed basing our draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrats' submission for this area. Under our draft recommendations, Hollesley with Eyke and Orford & Tunstall wards would have 1 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent and 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Rendlesham ward would initially have 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, improving to 3 per cent fewer by 2005.

135 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and Suffolk County Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but made no specific comments in relation to this area. Suffolk Association of Local Councils opposed our draft recommendations on a district-wide basis, but made no specific comment in relation to this area.

136 Hollesley Parish Council supported our proposed Hollesley with Eyke ward. However, Pettistree Parish Council "strongly objected" to the Commission's proposed Rendlesham ward, arguing that Campsey Ash, Pettistree and Rendlesham parishes are separated by the A12 trunk road and considered that it has no community ties with Campsey Ash or Rendlesham. The Parish Council stated that its community interests would be best served if included in a ward with Wickham Market or with the adjoining rural parishes of Bredfield and Dallinghoo (the Commission's proposed Otley ward). The parish council also expressed support for the District Council's Stage One proposed Otley ward. Rendlesham Parish Council also opposed our proposed Rendlesham ward, arguing that our proposals do not reflect the identities and interests of the local communities. It stated that Pettistree is a largely rural community with little or no identity with Rendlesham, a "rapidly developing urban estate". The parish council also opposed our draft recommendations for this area on the grounds that it would not secure effective and

convenient local government and stated that the Commission's "division of wards takes little account of the new housing proposed which has the potential to increase the electorate in Rendlesham by 50 per cent". Rendlesham Parish Council expressed a preference to be included in a ward with Campsey Ash, Eyke, Tunstall and Wantisden, as these parishes have common needs and interests linked with the development of the Bentwaters Air Base. The parishes are also linked by the B1078 and the B1084, and the Parish Council considered that community ties would be better reflected under their proposals than under our draft recommendations.

137 Sudbourne Parish Council objected to our proposed Orford and Tunstall ward and expressed support for the District Council's Stage One proposal for a revised Orford ward.

138 Having carefully considered all the evidence received, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final, subject to an amendment to our proposed Rendlesham ward. We recognise the concerns of Pettistree and Rendlesham Parish Councils and are persuaded that the A12 road does provide a substantial barrier between the parish of Pettistree and the parishes of Campsey Ash and Rendlesham. Therefore we propose to add Pettistree to a revised Melton & Ufford ward (it is currently in a ward with Ufford). However, this would result in the number of electors per councillor in the modified Rendlesham ward varying from the average for the district by 13 per cent by 2005. We have examined alternative warding arrangements and consider that this revised proposal would provide for the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our final recommendations, Hollesley with Eyke and Orford & Tunstall wards would have 1 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent and 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Rendlesham ward would initially have 19 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (13 per cent fewer by 2005). Details of our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Dennington, Earl Soham, Framlingham and Glemham wards**

139 These four wards are located in the western part of the district. Framlingham ward contains the large village of Framlingham, while Dennington, Earl Soham and Glemham wards are largely rural and surround Framlingham village. Dennington contains the six parishes of Badingham, Bruisyard, Cransford, Dennington, Rendham and Sweffling. Earl Soham ward also contains six parishes, Brandeston, Earl Soham, Easton, Kettleburgh, Letheringham and Saxtead, while Glemham ward contains the five parishes of Great Glemham, Hacheston, Little Glemham, Marlesford and Parham. Framlingham ward contains the Framlingham Town Council area. Under existing arrangements each ward is represented by a single councillor. Dennington, Earl Soham and Glemham wards are currently over-represented and have 9 per cent, 18 per cent and 40 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively. These are expected to worsen to 10 per cent, 19 per cent and 43 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005. Due to recent growth, Framlingham ward is under-represented and has 41 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (43 per cent more by 2005).

140 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a revised two-member Framlingham ward comprising the existing ward and the majority of the existing Dennington ward (Badingham, Bruisyard, Cransford and Dennington parishes). The District Council proposed a revised single-member Earl Soham ward, comprising the existing Earl Soham ward (less Easton parish),

Cretingham, Hoo and Monewden parishes (currently in Otley ward) and Charsfield parish (currently in Hasketon ward).

141 The District Council also proposed a new single-member Campsey Ash ward, comprising the existing Glemham ward, Swefling parish (currently in Dennington ward), Easton parish (currently in Earl Soham ward), Campsey Ash parish (currently in Tunstall ward) and Stratford St Andrew parish (currently in Snape ward). Under the District Council's proposals, Campsey Ash, Earl Soham and Framlingham wards would have 11 per cent, 4 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent, 2 per cent and 5 per cent more than the average by 2005).

142 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised two-member Framlingham ward comprising the existing ward, as well as Badingham and Dennington parishes and Saxtead parish. They proposed a revised Earl Soham ward comprising the existing ward, Cretingham, Hoo and Monewden parishes and Charsfield parish. They also proposed a new single-member Hacheston ward, comprising the existing Glemham ward and Bruisyard, Cransford, Rendham and Swefling parishes. The Liberal Democrats' proposed Earl Soham, Framlingham and Hacheston wards would have 2 per cent, 4 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent more, 4 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

143 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed an alternative configuration of wards in this area based on a council size of 44. Their proposed wards would have electoral variances of no more than 3 per cent from the district average by 2005.

144 Dennington Parish Council and Cransford Parish Meeting opposed the District Council's proposals to include the parishes in a revised Framlingham ward, on the basis that there are profound differences between urban and rural parishes.

145 We carefully considered the submissions received at Stage One, and we noted that the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Councillors Hall and Howard all proposed a revised Framlingham ward which would contain at least two of the parishes surrounding Framlingham town. We noted that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Framlingham ward would include the larger parishes of Badington, Dennington and Saxtead and would provide for marginally better electoral equality than the District Council's proposal. In the light of these considerations we were content to put it forward as part of our draft recommendations. We also noted that there were some similarities between the District Council's and Liberal Democrats' proposals for Earl Soham ward and the existing Glemham ward. We considered, however, that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Hacheston ward would have the advantage of retaining the four smaller parishes of the existing Dennington ward and were therefore content to put forward the Liberal Democrats' proposed Earl Soham and Hacheston wards as part of our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations, Earl Soham and Hacheston ward would both have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005). Framlingham ward would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, both now and by 2005.

146 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and Suffolk County Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but made no specific comments in relation to this area. Suffolk Association of Local Councils opposed our draft recommendations on a district-wide basis, but made no specific comment in relation to this area. We received a further two representations in relation to this area at Stage Three. Badingham Parish Council expressed support for our proposed revised two-member Framlingham ward. Great Glemham Parish Council opposed our proposed Hacheston ward but submitted no detailed argumentation or alternative proposals.

147 Having carefully considered the evidence received we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. We recognise the concerns of Great Glemham Parish Council in relation to our proposed Hacheston ward, but in the light of no new evidence or viable alternative propose confirming our draft recommendations for this ward as final. Under our final recommendations, Earl Soham and Hacheston ward would both have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005). Framlingham ward would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, both now and by 2005. Details of our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Aldeburgh, Buxlow and Snape wards**

148 The three wards of Aldeburgh, Buxlow and Snape are located to the north of the River Alde, and are broadly bounded by the A12 in the west and the North Sea in the east. Aldeburgh ward is represented by two councillors and comprises Aldeburgh town. Buxlow ward is represented by a single councillor and comprises the three parishes of Aldringham-cum-Thorpe, Friston and Knodishall. Snape is also represented by a single councillor and comprises the five parishes of Benhall, Farnham, Snape, Stratford St Andrew and Sternfield. Under existing arrangements Aldeburgh and Snape wards are significantly over-represented, with 25 per cent and 22 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (17 per cent and 23 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Buxlow ward has 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average and is projected to increase to 8 per cent more than the average by 2005.

149 At Stage One, the District Council, with support from the Liberal Democrats, proposed a revised two-member Aldeburgh ward comprising the existing ward and Aldringham parish. It also proposed a revised single-member Snape ward and proposed including Stratford St Andrew parish in a new Campsey Ash ward, as previously discussed. It also proposed transferring Knodishall parish to a revised Leiston ward, as detailed below. Under the District Council's proposals, Aldeburgh and Snape wards would both have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (8 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

150 The Liberal Democrats also proposed a revised single-member Snape ward comprising the existing ward and Friston parish (currently in Buxlow ward). Under their proposals, Knodishall parish would be transferred to a revised Leiston ward, as detailed below. The Liberal Democrats' proposed Snape ward would have 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

151 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed an alternative configuration of wards in this area based on a council size of 44. Under their proposals no ward would have electoral variances of more than 10 per cent.

152 Aldringham-cum-Thorpe and Knodishall parish councils opposed the District Council's proposals to transfer their parishes to revised Aldeburgh and Leiston wards respectively. The parishes favoured retaining the current Buxlow ward, arguing that the parishes share strong community ties. Three local residents opposed the District Council's proposal to combine Knodishall and Theberton parishes with Leiston town, and favoured retaining the existing Buxlow ward. Another resident also favoured retaining the existing Buxlow ward and opposed the District Council's proposal to transfer Friston parish to a revised Snape ward.

153 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and gave careful consideration to the views expressed by Aldringham-cum-Thorpe and Knodishall parish councils, and noted that the existing Buxlow ward has an acceptable level of electoral equality. However, in formulating our recommendations, it was necessary to have a view to the district as a whole. We considered that significant changes are needed to warding arrangements in this area in order to achieve improved electoral equality for the district as a whole and we were not persuaded by the evidence received at Stage One that this aim could be achieved by retaining the existing Buxlow ward.

154 We noted that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats concurred with respect to their proposals for a revised Aldeburgh ward, and we were content therefore to put forward a revised two-member Aldeburgh ward as part of our draft recommendations. We also noted that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed broadly similar Snape wards. Under both proposals Snape ward would contain Benhall, Farnham, Friston, Snape and Sternfield parishes. However, the District Council proposed also including Blaxhall parish, while the Liberal Democrats proposed retaining Stratford St Andrew parish within Snape ward, and we noted that our proposal to include Blaxhall parish in a new Orford & Tunstall ward, as discussed previously, limited the extent to which we were able to put forward the District Council's proposed Snape ward. We therefore proposed putting forward the Liberal Democrats' proposed single-member Snape ward as part of our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations, Aldeburgh and Snape wards would have 2 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

155 At Stage Three the District Council, the Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and Suffolk County Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but made no specific comments in relation to this area.

156 We received a further 187 representations in relation to this area at Stage Three. Aldringham-cum-Thorpe, Knodishall (enclosing a 47 signature petition) and Friston parish councils and 184 local residents opposed our proposed Aldeburgh and Snape wards. Aldringham-cum-Thorpe Parish Council expressed a preference for retaining the existing Buxlow ward on the grounds of community identity and interest. The Parish Council proposed an alternative configuration stating that it would be more beneficial than our recommendations if Aldeburgh town and Aldringham-cum-Thorpe parish were warded to enable the councillor representing the ward to attend the majority of their parish meetings, but did not provide any detailed evidence or

argumentation. Friston Parish Council opposed our proposed Snape ward and expressed a preference for retaining the existing Buxlow ward, also on the grounds of community identity and interest, but provided no new evidence or alternative warding arrangements.

157 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three and are content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. We have given careful consideration to the views expressed by Aldringham-cum-Thorpe, Knodishall and Friston parish councils and many local residents and note that the existing Buxlow ward has an acceptable level of electoral equality. However, in formulating our final recommendations we are unable to consider any one area in isolation but must have a view of the district as a whole. We consider that significant changes are needed to warding arrangements in this area in order to achieve improved electoral equality for the district as a whole and we have not been persuaded by the evidence received at Stage Three that this aim could be achieved by retaining the existing Buxlow ward. Under our final recommendations, Aldeburgh and Snape wards would have 2 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Details of our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Kelsale, Leiston and Saxmundham wards**

158 The three wards of Kelsale, Leiston and Saxmundham are located in the northern part of the district, broadly to the east of the A12 trunk road. Leiston is a three-member ward and comprises Leiston cum Sizewell parish. Kelsale is a single-member ward and comprises the two parishes of Kelsale cum Carlton and Theberton, while Saxmundham is also a single-member ward and comprises the town of Saxmundham. Under existing arrangements, Kelsale and Leiston wards are over-represented, with 35 per cent and 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average both now and in five years' time. Saxmundham ward is under-represented, with 21 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. The level of electoral equality in this ward is projected to worsen to 34 per cent fewer than the average by 2005.

159 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a revised three-member Leiston ward comprising the existing ward, plus Theberton and Knodishall parishes. It also proposed a revised two-member Saxmundham ward comprising the existing ward, plus Kelsale cum Carlton parish and Rendham parish. It argued that under a council size of 55 and the need to ensure a reasonable level of electoral equality, Knodishall and Theberton parishes were the most logical choices to be combined with Leiston town, and that Kelsale cum Carlton parish and Saxmundham town have very strong community links. Under the District Council's proposals, Leiston and Saxmundham wards would have 2 per cent more and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 1 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2005.

160 The Liberal Democrats also proposed revised Leiston and Saxmundham wards. Under their proposals, Leiston ward would be enlarged to include Knodishall parish, while a two-member Saxmundham ward would comprise the existing Saxmundham and Kelsale wards. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Leiston and Saxmundham wards would have 4 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent and 1 per cent fewer by 2005).

161 Councillors Hall and Howard, under their 44-member scheme, proposed an alternative configuration of wards in this area. Under their proposals no ward would have electoral variances of more than 7 per cent from the district average by 2005.

162 Leiston cum Sizewell Town Council strongly opposed the District Council's proposed Leiston ward, arguing that "the status quo was the most practical and entirely fair arrangement" and justified an electoral variance of 18 per cent both now and in 2005.

163 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and were not persuaded by the evidence received that retaining the status quo in this area would provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, having regard to the district as a whole. We noted that the proposals submitted by the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Councillors Hall and Howard would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality both now and in five years' time. We noted, however, that our proposed council size of 55 limited the extent to which we were able to consider Councillors Hall and Howard's proposals, which were based on a council size of 44. We noted that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats both proposed revised Leiston and Saxmundham wards. However, as a result of our proposal to include Rendham parish in a single-member Hacheston ward, as discussed previously, we were unable to put forward the District Council's proposals for this area. We considered that the Liberal Democrats' proposals would provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and were content to put them forward as part of our draft recommendations.

164 At Stage Three, the District Council and Suffolk County Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but made no specific comments in relation to this area. Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council also expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but noted that residents in Knodishall were concerned that urban towns such as Leiston have very different interests to rural villages, and that these interests would be marginalised if included in a ward with Leiston. The Liberal Democrats proposed warding Leiston to answer the concerns of Knodishall residents but provided no detailed evidence or argumentation.

165 Knodishall Parish Council (enclosing a 47 signature petition) and 184 local residents opposed our proposed Leiston ward. The respondents expressed a preference for retaining the existing Buxlow ward on the grounds of community identity and interest.

166 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three and are content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. We have given careful consideration to the views expressed by Knodishall Parish Council and local residents, and note that the existing Buxlow ward has an acceptable level of electoral equality. However, in formulating our final recommendations we cannot consider any one area in isolation and must have a view of the district as a whole. We consider that significant changes are needed to warding arrangements in this area in order to achieve improved electoral equality for the district as a whole and we have not been persuaded by the evidence received at Stage Three that this aim could be achieved by retaining the existing Buxlow ward. Under our final recommendations, Leiston and Saxmundham wards would have 4 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average

respectively (5 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Details of our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

### **Bramfield & Cratfield, Walberswick, Westleton and Yoxford wards**

167 The four wards of Bramfield & Cratfield, Walberswick, Westleton and Yoxford are located in the northern part of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. Bramfield & Cratfield ward contains the 11 parishes of Bramfield, Chediston, Cookley, Cratfield, Heveningham, Huntingfield, Linstead Magna, Linstead Parva, Thorington, Ubbeston and Walpole. Walberswick ward contains the three parishes of Blythburgh, Walberswick and Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet, while Westleton ward comprises the four parishes of Darsham, Dunwich, Middleton and Westleton. Yoxford ward comprises Peasehall, Sibton and Yoxford parishes. Under existing arrangements, all four wards are over-represented. Bramfield & Cratfield, Walberswick and Yoxford wards have 9 per cent, 20 per cent and 29 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (14 per cent, 15 per cent and 28 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Westleton ward has 30 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average and this level of electoral variance is projected to remain unchanged by 2005.

168 At Stage One, the District Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed identical warding arrangements in this area. They both proposed revised single-member Walberswick and Yoxford wards, and a new single-member Peasehall ward. Under the District Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Peasehall, Walberswick & Wenhaston and Yoxford wards would have 3 per cent, 3 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer, 7 per cent more and 7 per cent more than the average by 2005).

169 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed an alternative configuration of wards in this area based on a council size of 55. Under their proposals no ward would have an electoral variance of more than 5 per cent from the average by 2005.

170 Yoxford Parish Council proposed including Peasehall, Sibton, Yoxford, Middleton and Darsham parishes in a single ward.

171 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and noted that our proposed council size of 55 limits the extent to which we were able to consider the proposals submitted by Councillors Hall and Howard's for this area. We noted Yoxford Parish Council's preference for retaining Yoxford's current connections with areas to its west, rather than to its east. However, in the absence of alternative proposals for the whole of this area which would provide for improved electoral equality, we were unable to put forward Yoxford Parish Council's proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

172 We noted that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats concurred with regard to their proposals for this area and noted that they would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality, both now and in five years time. In the light of these considerations, we were content to put forward their proposed Peasehall, Walberswick & Wenhaston and Yoxford wards as part of our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations, Peasehall and Walberswick & Wenhaston wards would both have 3 per cent more electors per councillor than

the district average (1 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005). Yoxford ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially and 7 per cent more by 2005.

173 At Stage Three the District Council, the Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrat Constituency Party, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and Suffolk County Council expressed broad support for our draft recommendations but made no specific comments in relation to this area. Yoxford Parish Council reiterated their Stage One proposal for this area.

174 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage three we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. We note Yoxford Parish Council's preference for retaining Yoxford's current connections with areas to its west, rather than to its east. However, in the absence of alternative proposals for the whole of this area which would provide for improved electoral equality, we are unable to put forward Yoxford Parish Council's proposals as part of our final recommendations. Under our final recommendations, Peasenhall and Walberswick & Wenhaston wards would both have 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005). Yoxford ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially and 7 per cent more than the average by 2005. Details of our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 2.

## **Electoral Cycle**

175 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the district. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

176 At Stage Three no further comments were received to the contrary, and we therefore intend confirming our draft recommendation to retain the existing electoral cycle as final.

## **Conclusions**

177 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- In the south-west of the district, we propose amending the boundary between Riverside (in Woodbridge) and Martlesham wards to reflect the identities and interests of local communities.
- We propose modified parish warding arrangements in Martlesham.
- We propose amending the boundary between Kesgrave East and Martlesham wards in an area affecting no electors.

- We propose transferring Pettistree parish from Rendlesham ward and including it in a revised Melton & Ufford ward.

178 We conclude that, in Suffolk Coastal:

- a council size of 55 should be retained;
- there should be 34 wards, 8 fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 40 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of eight wards;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

179 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 and 2005 electorate figures.

*Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	55	55	55	55
Number of wards	42	34	42	34
Average number of electors per councillor	1,655	1,655	1,704	1,704
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	34	3	37	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	24	1	23	0

180 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 34 to three with one ward varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2005, with only one ward, Rendlesham, varying by more than 10 per cent from the average, at 13 per cent. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, while having regard to the statutory criteria.

**Final Recommendation**

Suffolk Coastal District Council should comprise 55 councillors serving 34 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, Appendix A and in the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

**Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

181 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we proposed consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Felixstowe, Kesgrave, Martlesham and Woodbridge to reflect the proposed district wards.

182 The town of Felixstowe is currently served by 18 councillors representing six three-member wards: Felixstowe Central, Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North, Felixstowe South, Felixstowe South East and Felixstowe West.

183 In our draft recommendations we proposed that the town should be divided between five district wards; Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North, Felixstowe South, Felixstowe South East and Felixstowe West. In order to reflect the revised district warding arrangements we proposed that the number of town councillors and boundaries of East, North, South, South East and West Town Council wards should be amended. Central ward of Felixstowe Town Council would no longer exist.

184 We recognised that our proposals for this area differed from those expressed at Stage One, including those of Felixstowe Town Council, and welcomed further local views at Stage Three.

185 At Stage Three, Suffolk County Council, Councillors Dangerfield and Paddick (Felixstowe West) and a local resident supported our draft proposals for the Felixstowe area. However, a number of respondents, including the District Council, Town Council and the Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups on the Council, opposed the Commission's proposals.

186 However, as described earlier, we continue to believe that our warding arrangements for Felixstowe provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Therefore, having considered all the evidence received, we are confirming our draft recommendations for this area as final, and consequently confirm our draft recommendations for parish warding arrangements as final.

**Final Recommendation**

Felixstowe Town Council should comprise 17 councillors, one fewer than at present, and five wards: Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North, Felixstowe South and Felixstowe South East (returning three councillors) and Felixstowe West ward (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

187 The town of Kesgrave is currently served by 15 councillors and is not warded. In our draft recommendations we proposed that the town should be divided between two district wards, Kesgrave East and Kesgrave West. In order to reflect revised district warding arrangements we propose creating two new wards in Kesgrave town – Kesgrave East (returning nine councillors) and Kesgrave West (returning six councillors).

188 At Stage Three our draft proposals for the Kesgrave area received broad support, although Kesgrave Town Council opposed our proposed warding of Kesgrave on the grounds of community identity. However, as stated previously, under Schedule 11, we must ward the parish to reflect the warding at district level. Therefore, having considered all the evidence received and in the absence of any viable alternative proposals, we are confirming our draft recommendations for this area as final.

**Final Recommendation**

Kesgrave Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Kesgrave East (returning nine councillors) and Kesgrave West (returning six councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

189 The parish of Martlesham is currently represented by 15 councillors and is not warded. In our draft recommendations we proposed a new three-member Kesgrave East ward, containing the Deben Avenue area of Martlesham parish; a revised two-member Martlesham ward, containing the Martlesham village and Martlesham Heath areas; and a new single-member Riverside ward, containing that part of the parish to the north of the Ipswich to Lowestoft railway line. In order to reflect the revised district warding arrangements, we proposed creating four new wards in Martlesham parish – Martlesham West (returning one councillor), Martlesham North (returning two councillors), Martlesham Heath (returning six councillors) and Martlesham Village (returning six councillors).

190 At Stage Three, we received some proposals for amendments to our recommendations in the Martlesham area. We are content to accept the proposal that the electors in the Top Street area form part of Martlesham parish ward and that the proposed parish wards of Martlesham Heath and Martlesham Village be combined. We also propose a minor boundary amendment to the Martlesham West parish ward affecting no electors.

**Final Recommendation**

Martlesham Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Martlesham West (returning one councillor), Martlesham North (returning two councillors) and Martlesham (returning 12 councillors). The boundaries between the proposed parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

191 The town of Woodbridge is currently served by 15 councillors representing five three-member wards: Woodbridge Central, Woodbridge Farlingaye, Woodbridge Kyson, Woodbridge Riverside and Woodbridge Seckford. In our draft recommendations we proposed that the town should be divided between four district wards, Farlingaye, Kyson, Riverside and Seckford. In order to reflect the revised district warding arrangements we proposed that the number of town councillors and boundaries of Woodbridge Farlingaye, Woodbridge Kyson, Woodbridge Riverside and Woodbridge Seckford wards should be amended. Woodbridge Central ward would no longer exist.

192 At Stage Three, our proposals for the Woodbridge area received broad support, although a number of respondents opposed the inclusion of the electors in the Top Street area (from Martlesham parish) in the proposed Riverside district ward. However this would not affect parish warding arrangements in Woodbridge.

193 As a consequence of confirming our draft recommendations for district warding in Woodbridge as final, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations for parish warding arrangements in Woodbridge Town as final.

**Final Recommendation**

Woodbridge Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, one more than at present, representing four wards, each returning four councillors: Woodbridge Farlingaye, Woodbridge Kyson, Woodbridge Riverside and Woodbridge Seckford. The boundaries between the four parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

194 In our draft recommendation report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district, and are confirming this as final.

**Final Recommendation**

For parish and town councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the District Council.

*Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal*

## 6 NEXT STEPS

195 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Suffolk Coastal and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

196 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 6 August 2001.

197 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

The Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions  
Local Government Sponsorship Division  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU



## APPENDIX A

### **Final Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal: Detailed Mapping**

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Suffolk Coastal area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2 and A3 and the large map at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding arrangements in the western part of Felixstowe town.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed warding arrangements in the central and eastern part of Felixstowe town.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Kesgrave, Martlesham and Woodbridge.

*Map A1: Final Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Warding in the Western Part of Felixstowe Town*

*Map A3: Proposed Warding in the Central and Eastern part of Felixstowe Town*

## APPENDIX B

### Draft Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of only two wards, where our draft proposals are set out below.

*Figure B1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Melton & Ufford	Melton ward (Melton parish); Ufford ward (part – Ufford parish)
Rendlesham	Tunstall ward (part – Campsey Ash and Rendlesham parishes); Ufford ward (part – Pettistree parish)

*Figure B2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Melton & Ufford	2	3,460	1,730	5	3,555	1,778	4
Rendlesham	1	1,508	1,508	-9	1,660	1,660	-3

*Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Suffolk Coastal District Council.*

*Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*



## APPENDIX C

### Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm), requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

#### *Commission compliance with Code criteria*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage	The Commission complies with this requirement
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose	The Commission complies with this requirement
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain	The Commission complies with this requirement
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals	The Commission complies with this requirement
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation	The Commission consults on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken	The Commission complies with this requirement
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated	The Commission complies with this requirement

